



April and May showers bring June ... not flowers, mosquitoes.

After the heavy rains of May and subtropical storm Alberto, the biting bugs are back and you should protect your family.

The bug to watch for is the Aedes mosquito, a small, black one with white spots that lives close to people, right outside or inside your house. They specialize in biting humans, and stay active all day.

Aedes mosquitoes carry Zika virus and other tropical viruses such as chikungunya and dengue fever. So far this year, no locally transmitted cases of tropical diseases have been reported in South Florida but a few cases have been reported in people who traveled to countries where the diseases are present.

"Everyone should be aware of mosquitoes and take steps to protect themselves," says Dr. Paula Thaqui, director of the Florida Department of Health in Broward County. "The best way to do that is to avoid being bitten. We recommend a practice called Drain and Cover."

Drain standing water in and around the house.

Get rid of water that collects in garbage cans, tires, buckets, roof gutters, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots and plants with pockets, such as bromeliads. Discard items where rain or sprinkler water collects. Clean bird baths and pet water bowls twice a week.

Eliminate even puddles, because Aedes can breed in containers as small as a bottle cap. Aedes can even breed inside the home, in spots where water drips and collects.

Cover yourself and the openings in your home. If you go outdoors when mosquitoes are active, wear shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves. Spray your skin and clothing with repellent containing DEET or other approved ingredients (check the label). Keep windows and doors closed, and repair damaged screening.

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